

11/58  
Dear Karl Paul:

Esther and I were very much distressed to hear of your relapse, and hope you get the h' out of there in quick order, both for your own good and Lakeview's.

Your clipping-report was not altogether news to us this time -- we rather wish sometimes that we heard about anything else during this last month. But the arrangement you quoted sound interesting, if I went as I read into your card like this:

MORE CORN BELT  
HOG DEALS  
Nobel Prize Winners

I suppose Tatum and Beadle will be as surprised as I am that we have been doing agricultural research, but if we define a class by enumeration, it does account for a lot of fine things Wisconsin does under that name. Do you suppose the Corn Belt Hog Dealers read the phrase in the same way?

Esther's been doing her best to keep up the usual routine of lab work this last month; I've just about given up myself, mostly to take care of mss., grants and other incidents of moving. We're planning a very hasty trip to Sweden next week (will be away about 10 days starting Dec. 6) and will start moving in January about a month after we've gotten back. So I don't count on getting too much done in the lab until we're out at Stanford, and perhaps not then for a while. ~~XX~~ Esther and I had had a previous plan to visit Cavalli at Pavia for three months after April 1 1959, and will still pursue it, taking advantage of the opportunity to postpone my Nobel address until then-- which means one relief. I have been sweating out a formal ~~speech~~ speech of acknowledgment for the Nobel ceremonies, and thought you might like to read it in draft. But please keep this confidential, as I may change some awkward passages. ~~THE~~ D-day on this is December 10. I should feel more personally gratified by this than I do, but neither of us has been able to feel more than caught up impersonally in a process we have no control over, and I suppose this shows up in the enclosed.

There was one item I had hoped to discuss with you before our departure, but I don't suppose you actually remember any carbohydrate chemistry any more since you fell into that moustrap of warfarin. Anyhow, looking for some evidence on the nature of asexual 'receptor' in E coli, it turns out that maleness is inactivated (without killing the cells) by treatment with sodium periodate M/1000 at neutral pH. This was done by analogy with the inactivation of RBC receptors for influenza virus, and likewise points to a (muco-?)polysaccharide as a specific 'male' substance on the cell surface. Actually, we had expected the female cells to have a specific receptor (presumably as a substrate for some male enzyme to penetrate the female walls) but fortunately the initial test was designed naively enough to pick up the inactivation either way. We are trying rather crudely to assay for, and perhaps isolate the target substance.

As ever,

Joshua Lederberg